1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

825 As we have seen (p. 417), there is a belief that a man who fails in the performance of certain sacred duties may be killed by a tiger, but the Todas do not appear to fear this animal except on behalf of their buffaloes, and I could only learn of one case in which a Toda had been killed, and as his name was not known it must have occurred very long ago, or may have been altogether mythical.

The Jackal.—I was told by my interpreter that he had seen the Todas saluting a jackal, but I did not hear of any beliefs associated with the practice.

825 262 174 *The Sambhar.*—The most interesting point in connexion with this animal is the fact that the Todas are undoubtedly permitted to eat its flesh. Kutadri, who was most scrupulous in his obedience to the customs of his people, had no reluctance in eating sambhar flesh, and when he had fallen ill soon after, he never thought of ascribing his illness to what was probably its real cause, which shows clearly that there could have been no idea that he had done anything forbidden or unorthodox.

The fact that the Todas may eat the flesh of the sambhar while taking that of no other animal, except ceremonially, might well be looked upon as an indication that there may at one time have been totemic restrictions on food. In their earlier homes, before they reached the Nilgiri Hills, it is probable that the sambhar was an unknown animal, and could not therefore have been a totem. Consequently, when they came to the Nilgiris, they would have found there an animal on the eating of the flesh of which there were no restrictions, and the absence of restriction would, on this hypothesis, have continued to the present day. The eating of sambhar flesh would be the proverbial exception that proves the rule.

[224] It seems to me possible, however, that there is a different reason for the absence of any prohibition. The Todas have no weapons with which they could kill a sambhar, and if this animal is ever killed by Kotas or Kurumbas, the mere fact that it had been killed by these people would probably be a sufficient reason why the Todas should not eat its flesh.

It is possible that it is only since the advent of Europeans

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

CHAPTER VIII.

FOOD.

Diet—Kûtu—Badaga and Kota Neighbours prey on the Todas—Todas give away valuable Property—Not flesh eaters—Ceremony of eating Buffalo flesh—Don't drink Spirits—Children's Food—Family Meals—Grace before Meat—No Weapons of the Chase—No variety of Live Stock.

CHAP. VIII.

524 526 578 411 204

THE Todas have no sports or games, except the innocent tip cat, corresponding in its play very much with our boys' game of rounders. No violent exercise. No means of settling disputes by scientific personal conflict, as in wrestling, fencing or boxing. Nothing in fact pointing to natural turbulence of character and surplus energy. They wear no weapons of offence or defence. They do not even hunt, either, for the sake of providing themselves with food, or for the pleasure of the chase.

241 They do not attempt to till the ground.

234 262 177 262 457 439 427 The products of the buffalo form the main staple of Toda diet. No doubt, at some time or another, they depended upon that animal more than they do now; in a period when they were isolated from contact with agricultural races. Now they are well supplied with the ordinary cereals of the country, as rice, wheat, barley, varieties of the pea, millet and other small grain, also sugar, salt, and tobacco; all of which items are, and for many generations have been, either purchased from the surrounding tribes by the barter or sale of their own surplus ner, or obtained by the levy from their neighbours,

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

but see that both convenience and good habits have been consulted in following these rules. CHAP. VIII.

Before eating, each member of the family takes a little of the food in his fingers, and raising it to the forehead says Swâmi! Swâmi![7] then places it on the ground as a present to bhumi tai[8] or mother earth. After meals these offerings are swept out of doors.

Before the Englishman came to the Nilagiris, and colonised the Todas' land, the country was full of game; hares, peafowl, partridge, jungle fowl, and numerous small birds, filled the secluded woods: deer of sorts, bison, and jungle-sheep roamed their open pastures: the tiger and leopard were common: and packs of the wild dog—chen nai[9]—running mute, hunted the largest deer with the unerring certainty of fate. The Toda buffalos, half-wild, had learnt to defend themselves and their young by tactics, the offspring of their bravery and skill; forming a rough triangular phalanx, with the courageous and strong bulls at apex and flanks, and the females and young in the hollow of the base, they would face the common enemy, and charging him in a body, gore and trample him under foot. The Todas, confident in the prowess of these animals, leave them to be herded by mere striplings armed with light wands; knowing that the animals, and the children under their protection, would be perfectly safe.

Yet in the face of these attractions of sport: in the presence of considerable danger: and with the example of the brute creation before them, they have not adopted a weapon, even one so simple as a spear. They neither make nets, nor do they construct traps or pitfalls. They do not employ any of

[7] Swâmi = *lord*.

[8] Bhumi tai = *earth mother*. It appears likely that both the words and the practice have been copied from the Badagas.

[9] Chen = *red*, nai = *dog*. May not the French *chien* be derived from chen = *the red (one)*?

CHAP. VIII.

224 the processes for driving game known throughout India. No idea of defence appears to have been entertained, or of obstruction, brighter than that of making the doors of their houses so small, that to enter them they must crouch, and crawl through the openings on all fours. No mode of catching game, more skilful than is implied in the beating the wild-dogs off the prey they have hunted down and are worrying, is known to them.

231 Had the Todas felt any disposition to add to the varieties of their food, or to increase the amount of their animal stock, or to indulge in meat diet, the surrounding country at once afforded them precedents and examples of people who had domesticated cows, sheep, goats, pigs, and poultry. Some exception might have been taken by them to the introduction of cows and sheep on pasture land which the august buffalo alone, should be permitted to enjoy: yet, as they narrate, they have brought home young bison, hoping to tame them, though failing in their attempt to do so. But fowls, pigs, and goats would have kept entirely to the woods adjoining the villages.

3: Breeks G-5 (no date) 1873 Toda

764 765 174 destruction, and of usefulness gone by for ever, contrasting pathetically with the hopes of immortality implied by the previous elaborate provisions for the future welfare of the dead. Such a recognition, however, implies a widely different religious life from that of the modern Toda. It is startling to contrast the respect for the dead to which this ritual testifies, with the utter indifference shown by the present race, not only to the disposal of the buffaloes, but even to the fate of old *Āsārams*. Numbers of these are to be found in different parts of the hills, but the Todas do not even always claim them as theirs; and in no case object to their being examined and destroyed. The sacrifice of the buffalo, the sprinkling of blood, the loosing of the calf,* and all the striking symbolism of their funeral rites, have no meaning for the present generation. Like the numerous gods who are never worshipped, and the preparatory penances of the priests who perform no priestly offices, these are but the strangely suggestive relics of a bygone faith.

411 173 224 262 776 782 The burning at funerals of a mimic bow and arrow together with the daily-used implements of the deceased, and the importance assigned to the bow in the marriage ceremony, seem to me inexplicable, except on the theory that the bow was once the chief weapon of the Todas, although they are ignorant of its use now.† This view is in a measure confirmed by the Todas' admission that their ancestors ate samber flesh, and that they would gladly do so now if they could obtain it; and by the fact that they still recognise, and make offerings to, a hunting God under the name of Bētikhān, who, though he now resides in a temple at Nambilicotē beyond Gudalūr, is, they say, the son of their ancestor Dirkish.

174 411 224 The question then arises: how and when did the bow fall into disuse with the Todas? a disuse the more strange, because some of the jungle tribes near the base of the Nīlagiris are still expert archers.

The answer would seem to be found in the tradition mentioned by Colonel Ouchterlony, viz.—that before the Badagas and Kotas came to the Hills, the Todas lived only by their herds, and wore leaves. As far as the leaf dresses go, the story seems apocryphal. If the Todas had only adopted clothes after the arrival of the Badagas and Kotas, their garments would probably have Badaga or Kota names, whereas *pūthuli, tharp, kōsu, &c.*, are among the few Toda words which Mr. Metz can trace to no Dravidian roots. Besides, a hunting race would certainly wear skins: however, the story probably contains some truth. Before the cultivating tribes settled in the Hills, the Todas, unless they killed their cattle, would have no means of obtaining solid food except by hunting, for their traffic with the Western Coast must have been too inter-

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* The idea of the Scapegoat, Egyptian I believe, as well as Jewish, has more than one Indian illustration. The Baigas, who exercise priestly offices among the Gonds, loose fowls occasionally on this principle, while among some of the tribes of the N.W. Provinces, an inanimate representative is chosen in the shape of a sieve or winnow which is beaten in every corner of the house and then thrown outside the village, to carry away the poverty of the people. (*Tribes of the N.W. Provinces, Sir H. Elliot.*)

† I do not overlook the fact that both Badagas and Kotas burn the bow at their funerals; but this I think is borrowed. That the Badagas do copy the Todas, is evident; for although they do not kill a cow, they go through the form of dragging one up to the funeral pile, seizing a diminutive country cow by the neck and horns, and pulling it along with a ludicrous imitation of the Todas' struggles with their powerful buffaloes.

The Badagas have also adopted the *Tēr* or funeral car of the Kotas, an innovation which astonishes the Gurus from Mysore who occasionally visit the Hills.

The Todas and Kotas have a good deal in common, of which I shall speak afterwards.

3; Breeks G-5 (no date) 1873 Toda

174 mittent and insignificant to be depended on for subsistence. Probably they were then
411 expert in the use of the bow, but when they found that they could obtain from the cultivators a share of their produce, such an idle race as the Todas would naturally abandon the toilsome and precarious occupation of hunting.

224 The disuse of the bow is thus, to a certain extent evidence of an improvement in the material condition of the Todas, though unaccompanied by any advance in civilisation: still, as they themselves admit that it would be convenient to supplement their food by samber* flesh, their present inability to procure it, shows how easily a semi-savage race may lay aside and forget† arts of obvious utility as soon as the pressure of absolute necessity is withdrawn.

174 It is noteworthy that this indication of a still wilder life than that of the modern Toda, should occur side by side with traces of so much higher a religious condition.

764 The disposal of the body is suggestive. Col. Dalton, in an account‡ of somewhat
765 similar funeral rites among the Kols, observes that some of the accessories of their ceremonial suggest the idea that their dead were originally buried, not burnt. The Toda ceremonies convey this impression with still greater clearness. The *Berrkvur* probably represents an actual bier, and the sprinkling of earth on the body and in the circle, as before described, leads almost inevitably to the conclusion that the body was formerly buried, *and that the stone circle was the original burying place.*

784 The minor observances present coincidences interesting, but of little ethnological importance, such as the dread of looking back, as old as Orpheus and Eurydice; and the three handfuls of earth which recall our own funeral rites.

000 It would be desirable to obtain detailed accounts from eye-witnesses of the ceremonies of other Indian Hill tribes, and of the Low Castes of the plains. It seems to me that it is in such observances, rather than in the every-day life of these tribes, that the most valuable indications of their previous condition are to be found; because, while circumstances necessarily affect their ordinary life, customs of this kind may remain unchanged for centuries.

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* Sámber, commonly known as the Indian Elk, a large kind of deer.

† Vide—Sir J. Lubbock *On the origin of civilization and primitive condition of Man*, page 331:—
"The art of spinning and the use of the bow are quite unknown to many races of savages, and yet
"would hardly be likely to have been abandoned when once known"!
Sir J. Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times*, page 451:—
"Many again, of the ruder arts, as for instance the manufacture of pottery, and of bows, are so useful,
"and at the same time, however ingenious in idea, so simple in execution, as to render it highly
"improbable that they would ever be lost, when they had once been acquired"!

‡ Col. Dalton's *Kols of Chota Nagpore. Transactions Ethnological Society, Vol. VI., New Series, page* 37. He says that among the *Hos* and *Moondahs* a corpse is burnt in a very stout coffin furnished with projections as if to facilitate transport. With the body are burnt all the clothes and ornaments of the deceased, and what money he had with him at his death. The larger fragments of bone are afterwards selected (the rest being buried at once) and hung up for some time in a place where they may be constantly viewed by the mother or widow. After some time a large monumental stone is brought to the family burying ground. The bones are carried in procession to the houses of relatives, who mourn over them, and to the favourite haunts of the deceased, preceded by men with drums, and girls carrying empty and half broken pitchers, which from time to time they reverse. Ultimately the procession circles round and round a large hole at the burying place, the bones are placed in a new earthen vessel, and deposited with a quantity of food in the grave, which is covered by the monumental stone.—Compare the reversed pitchers and interment in an earthen vessel with the account of caims at the end of this volume.